



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Monday, February 7, 2005
For the purpose of holding a stakeholder meeting with the Prince George's
County Economic Development Corporation

The meeting began at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Councilmember Konrad E. Herling arrived at about 7:45 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Kwasi Holman, President and CEO of the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, Kap Kapastin, Quantum Management, Beltway Plaza; Al Geiger, Greenbelt News Review.

Following introductions, Mayor Davis welcomed Mr. Holman and explained the purpose of Council's stakeholder meetings.

Mr. Holman spoke of his priorities in the first year of his appointment as head of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). He said his top two priorities were meeting with all the existing businesses in the county and focusing on support for rapid-growth companies. As an example of the second category, he gave Internosis, which recently moved from Virginia to the Golden Triangle. He said he is working toward the first goal by beginning with the 200 largest employers in the county, including government agencies such as Goddard, BARC, and the University of Maryland, College Park. In response to a question from Mayor Davis, he said he would send the City a copy of the Greenbelt employers who fall in this group of 200.

Other activities include: an ongoing series of "broker breakfasts" to support brokers in bringing businesses into county commercial spaces; a small business initiative; an initiative to strengthen and support businesses in established communities inside the Beltway; and development of a "new vision for economic development" for the county, including creation of a five-year plan. He also described demographic research undertaken last year to support efforts to bring more high-end retail to the county. He said he expected this to pay off in the next 12-18 months.

The Mayor commented that one reason the City does not support construction of the Intercounty Connector is that it may shift development farther from the established areas of the county.

In response to a question from the Mayor about an article in the Gorgeous Prince George's newsletter implying plans were in place for Greenbelt Station, Mr. Holman said the intent was to stress that the county will become more aggressive about encouraging development at metro stations comparable to that at stations in other jurisdictions. Mayor Davis said that protection of the environmentally sensitive land at Greenbelt Station was important to the City. Mr. Putens stressed that the City is supportive of good development and wants to see good development in that location, but he said the City does not hesitate to fight poorly conceived development.

Mayor Davis said that other items affecting economic development in the City were the redevelopment of Springhill Lake, empty business space in some locations, and the potential location of Goddard vendors and contractors on their campus. Regarding the latter, she noted that this would not only place them on non-taxable government land but would also take them out of commercial office space.

Mr. Roberts asked about the Space Camp at Goddard, which was of interest to the previous director of the EDC. Mr. Holman responded that this project was essentially internal to Goddard and not a current priority for the EDC.

Mr. Herling commented on the role of the arts in redevelopment and the impressive work that has been done along the Route 1 Gateway in the area of Mt. Ranier.

Mayor Davis asked if there was anything the City Council could do to assist him. Mr. Holman asked that the City continue to let him know of its concerns and keep the dialogue going.

Mr. Putens remarked that the City had spoken of forming its own Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Holman replied that it could be done, but the problem was always getting the critical mass.

Mayor Davis commented on the importance of public transportation to the mix of economic development. Mr. Herling suggested that WMATA be approached regarding advertising or public service announcement space for the county in the stations serving the Green Line. Mr. Holman thanked him for that suggestion and said he would pursue it.

Other Business

Mr. Herling announced the local film festival for the Greenbelt Theatre on Veterans Day weekend had been worked out.

Mr. Roberts suggested the renovation of Greenbelt Middle School as a possible target for donations from the Silver Diner.

It was agreed to reschedule the Executive Session on Greenbelt Station from February 10 to either February 23 or 24.

Mr. McLaughlin announced there would be a groundbreaking ceremony at the new postal facility at 1 p.m. on February 28. He distributed a memo from Terri Hruby regarding the clearing at the site.

Mayor Davis reported on a meeting with Congressman Hoyer. Mr. McLaughlin will follow up with Dr. Johnson about his mention of BARC needing to undertake development on its property.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk